

Seven months into the new administration, it is clear that Obama is on his way to failure and worse, potentially dragging a whole range of progressive causes down to defeat. For so many disappointed activists, the honeymoon is over and the thrill is gone, and what remains is a trail of broken promises and betrayals.

The question is no longer how to save Obama, but how to defend causes that were here long before Obama arrived, and will be here long after he is gone.

In the long run we need a timely challenge to Obama in order to avoid a potentially more catastrophic reactionary Republican presidency. In the short run, we need a revival of the peace movement on the Afghanistan issue.



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NEEDED:

A LEFT, ANTI-WAR OPPOSITION TO OBAMA



AFGHAN-PAKISTAN WAR ESCALATES TOWARD A DECADE OF SLAUGHTER

During July, 41 US soldiers, 34 NATO troops, and thousands of civilians died in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Obama's hand-picked commander is Gen. McChrystal, who, in a macabre mockery of Obama's election promises, was implicated in torture in Iraq.

(The New York Times, May 31, 2009.)

Obama is escalating the Afghan war beyond Bush and behind the scenes McChrystal is already demanding a doubling of US troop strength. Military experts are warning that the United States is "taking on security and political commitments that will last at least a decade and a cost that will probably eclipse that of the Iraq war."

(Walter Pincus, Washington Post, August 9, 2009.)

At this stage in the Iraq war, there were mass demonstrations against Bush, which he ignored. Today, it would be much harder for Obama to ignore similar actions, but the peace movement leaders are AWOL, silent and nowhere to be found.

We must mount mass demonstrations in 2009 against the Afghan war before Iran, Pakistan, and even China or Russia becomes embroiled. We are sick and tired of foreign wars and we want all US troops brought home from the Iraq and Afghan war zones. We also want the U.S. administration to stop making trouble with the Russians in Georgia, Ukraine, and Poland, since the stakes here could include nuclear war.

WALL STREET DOMINATION

Under Obama's bailout, Wall Street's credit line from the Treasury, the Fed, and the FDIC has reached about \$24 trillion, according to Treasury official Barofsky. Compare this to the mere \$300 billion of benefits for working families plus infrastructure contained in the stimulus. This means that, under Obama, the zombie bankers and hedge fund hyenas are beating the American people by a score of 80 to 1.

We want the bailout clawed back from the bankers and used to take care of state budget deficits, starting with California, with no cuts in vital services. We want real regulation of financial markets, starting with derivatives. We want a Tobin tax on Wall Street speculators. There is no Obama recovery: the rise of the stock market over the last few months is not prosperity, but more likely the beginning of hyperinflation – meaning the descent of the US economy into chaos, like Germany in 1923. The economic picture will continue to deteriorate, making Obama weaker and weaker.

OBAMA USES LEFT COVER – STRIP IT AWAY

By now, it should be apparent how Obama operates. The policies are not that different from Bush-Cheney, but they are carried out under left cover – a smokescreen of vaguely progressive rhetoric which turns out to be a tissue of lies. The Republicans and assorted right-wing extremists eagerly attack Obama's left-cover slogans, seldom the reality of his policies. The Republicans do not attack Obama as a warmonger and a Wall Street puppet, since this

points to the essence of the GOP. Instead, they prefer fantastic distortions about socialism and catering to trade unions.

Obama for his part welcomes attacks from ogres like Limbaugh, Hannity, and Gingrich, since he knows he looks good in comparison. Some leftists think that the way to influence Obama is to be nice to him. Nothing could be more misguided. Since Obama depends on his left cover camouflage to cloak his sellouts, the first step is to strip off the left cover. When this has been tried, as for example by the LGTB community, Obama has immediately offered some concessions. If the peace movement were to come back from the dead and demonstrate in force against Obama's war policies, there is every reason to expect that Obama's war policy could be impacted.

NEEDED: ANTI-WAR ACTION, NEW CANDIDATES

The American people are hungry for a real New Deal alternative, the only kind that can deliver real economic recovery, full employment, and lasting prosperity. A political alternative that is populist, protectionist, production-oriented, pro-labor, anti-Wall Street, anti-imperialist, and anti-war could score an astounding success. Obama has been tested and found tragically wanting. It is time to cut our losses and build for the future. Obama is not good enough and the GOP is a disaster. The American people deserve something better and we must see to it that they get it.